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Environmental Agencies Take Part in EarthFest at the DCR Hatch Shell *Department of Agricultural Resources booth kicks off summer "Ag Tag" campaign*

BOSTON – The Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) hopes to sway concert-goers at tomorrow's 15th Annual EarthFest to support locally-grown fruits, vegetables and other farm products by purchasing an "Ag Tag." Proceeds from the new specialty license plate will go to the Massachusetts Agriculture Trust Fund to pay for innovative programs that benefit the Commonwealth's agricultural sector.

"The Ag Tag is a moving billboard that will be seen by thousands of drivers everyday. It's an excellent way to put a positive brand on the Massachusetts agricultural community," said DAR Commissioner Doug Petersen, whose department is one of several Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs agencies planning to staff informational booths at tomorrow's (May 24) EarthFest, an environmentally-themed free concert produced by Radio 92.9 in conjunction with the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).

The event, held at the DCR Hatch Shell in Boston, will also feature a Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) booth focused on educating consumers about recycling, composting, junk mail reduction, and environmentally-friendly lawns and landscapes. The DCR Park Rangers, responsible for stewardship at parks and beaches across the Commonwealth, will have a booth as well.

With thousands expected to attend EarthFest, the DAR plans to use the event as an opportunity to point out the environmental benefits of supporting Massachusetts-grown agriculture. Purchasing Massachusetts products can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions since less carbon-producing fuel is burned transporting local products from the farm to consumers' tables.

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Featuring the tagline, “*Go Locally Grown!*,” the Ag Tag will go into production as soon as the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) receives reservations for 1,500 plates. Once that benchmark is reached, the initial cost to transfer a vehicle registration to an Ag Tag will be \$40, plus a \$20 exchange fee when the plate is picked up from the RMV. Renewal every two years costs \$81 – a \$41 RMV fee and a \$40 specialty license plate fee that goes to the Massachusetts Agriculture Trust Fund to support the work of non-profit agricultural organizations across the state. Motorists have the option of designating which organization they would like to support through an Ag Tag purchase.

Ag Tag reservation forms can be downloaded at <http://www.mass.gov/agr/agtag/index.htm>. Or, pick up an Ag Tag brochure at EarthFest tomorrow. More information about the event is available at <http://www.bostonradio929.com/earthfest.aspx>.

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